

Testimony in Support of S.B. 4 and H.B. 5381, Acts Concerning the Connecticut Clean Air Act

Dear Chairs Lemar and Haskell, Vice Chairs Cassano and Simms, Ranking Members Carney and Somers, and Members of the Transportation Committee:

My name is Dylan Council and I am a resident of New Haven. I'm writing to communicate my strong support for **S.B. 4 and H.B. 5381 - Acts Concerning the Connecticut Clean Air Act**. These bills would expand the use of electric vehicles in both the private and public sectors of the Connecticut economy and provide funds to help enforce the federal Clean Air Act. This is particularly important for combating climate change, particularly greenhouse gas emissions, ozone depletion, and smog particulate matter, because the transportation sector has had the highest emissions within the Connecticut economy every year since 1990. The state government has concluded that reducing transportation emissions is critical to meeting our goal of reducing emissions 45% below 2001 levels by 2030.

As of 2018 there were just over 17,000 out of 1.3 million vehicles registered in Connecticut that are electric. Estimates suggest that in order to reach the 2030 goal, that number will have to increase to around 500,000. The current Connecticut Hydrogen and Electric Automobile Purchase Rebate (CHEAPR) program is a good start, but it is underfunded and will not do nearly enough. Both bills include the "federal Clean Air Act fee," a continual payment to register or renew non-electric vehicles to individuals under the age of 65, which incentivizes the purchase of electric vehicles. The money collected from this fee will be used to implement infrastructure that promotes electric vehicle use, as well as contribute to the Clean Air Act account, which also directs money to sustainability initiatives. Thus, the federal Clean Air Act fee incentivizes electric vehicle use in both the consumer and infrastructure spheres. By expanding the funding available to CHEAPR, S.B. 4 and H.B. 5381 will help us solve the problem of persistent emissions in the transportation sector.

This legislation represents the common sense approaches we can take toward protecting the environment and our futures. H.B. 5381 advocates for increased use of electric vehicles and funds toward sustainable infrastructure, which would decrease fine particulate matter present in gasoline and diesel emissions in non-electric vehicles. The emphasis on electric vehicles would improve ambient air quality, complying with the federal Clean Air Act. Furthermore, S.B. 4 sets up a grant program to help fund new EV charging stations, and promotes their construction in both residential and non-residential buildings. This will be instrumental in achieving Connecticut's goals. It's difficult to see how Connecticut can reach its 500,000 electric vehicle target without increasing the availability of charging stations.

I urge you to take these steps to help move Connecticut towards a sustainable economy. The costs of climate change are enormous, from rising sea levels that endanger coastal homes, to loss of natural wonders that future generations will never enjoy, to more frequent freak weather events that can devastate communities. The EPA has reported that temperatures in Connecticut have been rising twice as fast as the rest of the US, which leads to increased flooding due to more intense rainfall. But if we act now, there is still time. I urge you to favorably vote S.B. 4 and H.B. 5381 out of the Transportation Committee to help decarbonize our economy and protect our future.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Dylan Council
New Haven, CT